

## **Columbus (Ohio) to Host 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the National Conference of Black Mayors**

Atlanta, Georgia. (March 21, 2005). A majority of this nation's 539 African American mayors will be in Columbus, Ohio during April 27<sup>th</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup> for the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the **National Conference of Black Mayors, Inc. (NCBM)**; and a virtual "who's who" in American politics has been invited to address the mayors. The theme of this year's annual event is **"The 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Meeting the New Challenges for Economic Growth."** Most of the convention events will take place at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. An exhilarating schedule of convention activities will include the Black Women Mayors' Caucus workshop and luncheon, general business sessions and "think-tanks," a Town Hall Meeting and an "Old School Party," hosted by the city of Columbus.

NCBM President, **Mayor Harvey Johnson** of Jackson, Mississippi, stated that "Our mayors are in the midst of many complex and serious problematic situations that face our cities - large and small: economic development; infrastructure needs; access to health care, energy and the environment; transportation policy as well as better housing and improved education. Our annual meetings and seminars give our member mayors the opportunity to work together seeking new solutions to problems that will safeguard our cities and towns and help our people."

"This is an opportunity to learn and celebrate, as we welcome mayors from cities large and small, representatives of the White House, members of Congress and other leaders to Columbus to discuss the challenges we are all facing today," said Mayor Michael B. Coleman, the 2005 NCBM Conference host. "We're proud to bring NCBM to a great American 21st Century City, where we can learn from the best on new strategies for creating jobs, keeping our neighborhoods safe, protecting the environment, building efficient City Halls and using technology to better serve our residents."

This 31<sup>st</sup> Anniversary Convention is expected to attract mayors from throughout the country including **Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin; Memphis Mayor W. W. Herenton; Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick; New Orleans Mayor C. Ray Nagin; and Philadelphia Mayor John Street.** Several hundred mayors representing small and medium-sized American cities will also be in attendance at the conference including **Mayor Shirley Gibson of Miami Gardens, (a new Florida city incorporated in 2003 with a population 100,000)), Mayor James Garner of Hempstead, N.Y.,** who is also the immediate past president of the U. S. Conference of Mayors, and **Mayor William Bell of Durham, N.C. and Mayor Bernard Kincaid of Birmingham, AL.** Mayors from Mississippi out number mayor from any other state with 71 members, North Carolina has 52 Mayors, Texas has 49, Louisiana has 47, Alabama 45 and Georgia has 41.

Keynote speakers on the conference agenda include **Reverend Doctor Frank Reid, III,** Senior Pastor of the Bethel AME Church in Baltimore, MD, speaking at the Mayors' Prayer Breakfast; and **Earl Graves,** Publisher of ***Black Enterprise***, who will speak at the Plenary Session. **LUDACRIS** and **MOS DEF,** both renowned recording artists, will speak at the Youth Day Luncheon. Honorees include **Russell Simmons,** a legendary

figure in the urban music industry, who is the recipient of the *Fannie Lou Hamer Award*, and **Cecily Tyson** is the recipient of the prestigious *Tribute to a Black American Award*.

**Dr. Cornel West, Minister Louis Farrakhan , George Frasier, The Honorable Maxine Waters, and Vivica Fox** round out the four-day meeting with appearances and presentations at the many workshops and seminars being held to inform, educate and entertain the attending mayors and other conference attendees.

The National Conference of Black Mayors, Inc. (NCBM) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) service organization which provides management and technical assistance to the member mayors and articulates the membership's concerns on national policy issues. A voluntary Board of Directors, comprised of mayors, who set organizational policy, governs NCBM.